

Main Scripture: 1 Tim 5:3-16 “Caring for Widows in the Church”

I. The importance of the Old Testament in considering the matter of widows

Jesus told us in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:17), “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. Jesus completely fulfilled some things, like His death on the cross fulfilled the whole sacrificial system, but other things are fulfilled by the Spirit of Christ living out the life God desires. In particular, how we treat widows.

I. A. How widows were treated around the nation of Israel, in its early history

Examples from Kittle (TDOT). Volume IX, On chra, section on the widow outside the OT: “It is important that in the West, the idea that the gods protect the poor including widows was hardly developed at all.” pg. 444; “In the military world there was indeed a welfare fund for invalids, orphans, and parents, but widows were not included.” pg. 144

II. Nine different indicators of God’s Heart for the Widow

1. In the mandate not to take advantage of **widows** in the law:

Ex. 22:22: “Do not take advantage of a **widow** or an orphan

2. In exempting her from giving her cloak as a pledge for a loan:

Deut. 24:17: Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the **widow** as a pledge.

3. In the well published mandating to the whole nation of justice for the **widow**:

Dt. 27:19: OT community to recite Dt. 27:19 - “Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the **widow**.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

4. Providing a way **widows** could work for food:

Dt. 24:19-21: The provision of places to harvest in the fields, vines, and trees – where the farmers were to leave some of the harvest to be gleaned.

5. Provision from the third year tithe:

Dt. 26:12-13: (referred to as the “sacred portion”) “When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the **widow**, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. Then say to the Lord your God, “I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the **widow**, according to all you commanded. I have not turned aside from your commands nor have I forgotten any of them.

6. Israel’s Hymnbook:

Psalms 68:4-5 & Psalm 146:9: The hymns in Israel’s Psalter—singing into our hearts the Heart of God for **widows**. Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds—his name is the Lord—and rejoice before him. A father to the fatherless, a defender of **widows**, is God in his holy dwelling.

7. In the Wisdom Literature

Prov. 15:25: The Lord tears down the proud man’s house but he keeps the **widow’s** boundaries intact.

8. Examples of the Righteous who reached out to the widows:

Job 29:13 & 2 Sam 14: Like Job, “I made the **widows**’ heart sing.” The man who was dying blessed me; I made the widow’s heart sing.

Like David, who put it in Israel’s hymn book, Psalm, and would listen to a pseudo **widow’s** case, even if it were a trumped up case by general Joab. Joab was confident that David would stop government to hear the case of a distressed **widow**.

9. The revelation of God’s caring miracles to certain **widows** whose faith became legendary:

1 Kings 17:1- & 2 Kings 4

III. Qualifications and a Caveat:

Not just any widowed woman was the focus of God’s special care, Is. 9:17, “Therefore, the Lord will take no pleasure in the young men, nor will he pity the fatherless and **widows**, for everyone is ungodly and wicked, every mouth speaks vileness.”

-How was the “true **widow**” identified in 1 Tim. 5:3-16?

- How was the “true **widow**” a treasure to the church?

What was the danger in having not true **widows** on the church’s “list”?

Application: NOTICE THE WIDOWS

- Name three of our several widows at E-Free: _____, _____, _____.
- Notice their distress: James 1:27, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and **widows**.”
 - Having no one to talk to—ponder
 - On average, losing 75% of fellowship groups (odd woman out)
 - Lacking a mate’s help in upkeep of home or yard
 - In Jesus’ day (in ours?), lack of food supply (See Acts 6)
 - Lack of transportation for certain key aspects of living such as _____, _____,
 - Managing finances when the husband used to do them, or an older **widow’s** mind no longer could process them; paying bills, etc.
 - Standing with the **widow** in court
 - First line of care for widows in _____ 1 Tim
-How many of our parents are still alive?
 - Recognize those who help minister to the older saints & **widows**-
-Ministry of Karl & Debby Hulbert & the others who help them